

2019 Senior Warden's Report

My Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I need to begin by saying that it has truly been my honor and privilege to serve as your Senior Warden for these last four years.

2019 was a great year in the life of St. John of the Cross. Here are just a few highlights:

The Bristol Homecoming Parade and the SJOC Strawberry Social were both a huge success! We provided Shortcakes & Ice Cream for free again this year (with freewill donations accepted) and our fellowship hall was packed with people enjoying sweet treats and fellowship. Our float won 1st place (again) this year!

Mass on the Grass became Mass in the Meadow as we joined with St. John the Evangelist (Elkhart), and St. David of Wales (Elkhart) to celebrate mass together, followed by food and fellowship. All three faith communities expressed the desire to do it again in 2020, & I believe that we are set to host.

We added a new event to our already busy calendar this fall, the Habitat for Humanity Faith Build. It was extremely well attended, and a prayerful and fulfilling day.

After years (and years) of working toward this goal, two columbaria were installed just before the ground froze. This will be a long term project with the planned addition of patio space, an ashes garden, and landscaping. Deb Walters, Steve and Judy Streeter, and Walt and Judy Johnson, deserve our heartfelt thanks.

Our Christmas food baskets and angel tree outreach were a huge success, and due to Mtr Jen, Deb Walters & Anne Raftree, the pick ups went more smoothly than in past years.

To ALL who helped and participated, thank you, thank you, thank you!

With our 175th anniversary last year, we spent much of 2018 celebrating our past and present. To follow that up, Mtr. Jen did a truly amazing job planning a vision discernment process, by asking us to define: Who Are We? Who Is Our Neighbor? and What Is God Calling Us To Do? Moving speakers from the Bristol Community Food Pantry, LoveWay, Habitat for Humanity, and the Bristol Police Dept. were carefully chosen to help us begin looking INWARD, OUTWARD, and FORWARD.

Several of these meetings focused specifically on our LGBTQ+ neighbors, followed by an open forum meeting where a strong majority of the congregation recommended to the vestry that we adopt the marriage policy of our national Episcopal Church. The Vestry then unanimously passed the following motion:

“We, the Vestry of St. John of the Cross Episcopal Church, based on our congregational Discernment process of 2019 regarding same-sex marriage, affirm the canons and rites regarding marriage set forth by the national Episcopal Church. We thereby authorize the Rector or Priest-in-Charge to solemnize the marriage of any two persons in compliance with these canons.”

I realize that not everyone in the parish was in full agreement. I would ask you to please reread the closing of Mtr. Jen’s Pastoral Letter of Nov. 18, 2019, and know deeply “that all are welcome in this place.”

A couple weeks ago Mother Jen asked me about my “legacy”, and what things I would like to see carried forward. At first I was a bit dismissive of the idea that I would have a legacy at all. As I sat down to write this report, I realized that I do have one thing to say on the subject.

At St. John Of The Cross, we do a tremendous job with stewardship both through your generosity and our treasurer and vestry’s ability to make the most of every dollar. We also know how to prioritize where that money will do the most good. I am very proud of the strides we have made in the last few years. In the 2020 budget we were once again able to increase Mtr. Jen’s hours from 33 to 35 hours per week, and raise her salary by \$1,000. She deserves all of that and more. 5 more hours to full time!

Thank you to Terry Scott. Words can’t express how much I appreciate your many hours of work on our finances, but even more than that, for your counsel, your positivity, and your sense of humor.

Thank you to all of the 2019 vestry, Bob, Steve, Jon & Joy.

Thank you for being:

A member of the Altar Guild.

A member of the Music Committee.

A Sunday School Teacher.

A Sunday School Student.

A Reader.

An Acolyte.

A member of the Choir.

A member of the Prayer Chain.

A member of the Cemetery Committee.

An Adult Christian Education Student.

A Bristol Food Pantry volunteer.

A CARES volunteer.

A Coffee Hour Host/ Hostess.

Supporting Kairos Outside (through a donation, prayer or coloring a picture.)

Thank you for:

Helping with the Strawberry Social.

Helping with the Sugar and Spice Bazaar.

Helping with the Pancake Supper.

Donating school supplies for backpacks.

Donating food for the Bristol food pantry.

Donating food for holiday baskets.

Donating presents for the angel tree.

Bringing a meal or dish to pass.

Yours in Christ,
Bruce Krueger, Senior Warden.